Normally, the chattering of the birds and the squirrels on a drizzly day calmed me. However, today, those chattering seemed forbidding. I felt like a stranger. Every chirp seemed a warning, every scamper seemed to say, "leave, stay away!" the mist clung to the trees' bare branches; hugged every trunk. The trails, blanketed by brown leaves. Intertwining, the branches reached out for each other; reached out for me. What little sun penetrated the cloak of most was swallowed by the branches. It started to drizzle. A drop fell on my eyelashes. I watched it fall, slowly, so slowly. The mist got heavier. In the distance, something howled. The putrid smell of rotting earth filled my senses. All I could hear, see, smell, taste and touch was rotting earth. Then my world turned black.  I don’t know how long I fainted, how long I lay in the forbidding forest, unconscious. The first thing I noticed was the darkness. I thought for a moment I was still unconscious, until rotting earth penetrated my nose. I jolted upright. I couldn’t stay here. The squirrels, the birds, even the mist had been telling me that since I came here. I was wanted in this forest. Scrambling up, I did what my instinct told me: R-U-N. I ran as if the devil was after me. I jumped at every crack, every movement. The zombie-like trees tripped me at every chance they got. Having run for half an hour nonstop, I took a rest. Where was I? The forest was eerie. No sound came at all from the depths of the forest. Just the sound of my panting. I took a moment to look at my surroundings.  I was in a clearing. There were no trees here. It was a perfect circle, almost man-made. The mist now hung suspended in the air. Looking up, I saw the moon. It was a full moon. Shuddering, I shook my head. NOTHING would happen just because there is a full moon. Still, I was glad when a black cloud covered the moon. My breathing was almost back to normal. I HAD to think clearly. I would walk north and go into the first house I saw. The problem is... where IS north????  I chose a path that looked promising. The trees still looked forbidding, it was still unnaturally silent. I walked and walked. The seconds turned into minutes, the minutes into hours. I lost track of time. The branches formed a roof over my head, allowing only fog in. finally, I saw a house in the distance.  DING DONG. It was an old fashioned bell. It echoed inside (dong dong dong) Nobody came. I opened the door, it creaked open. "Hello?" (Hello hello hello). The smell of rotting earth and dust nearly knocked me over. Holding my breath, I walked inside. In the dim light of the moon, you could see that the house hadn’t been inhabited in for years. I was about to turn around and look for another house, but the door slammed shut behind me. I didn't have to try to open it to know it wouldn't budge. Taking a deep breath, I walked one step at a time towards the huge staircase at the center of the house. It wound down from the second floor, sweeping everything else away. The corridor was dotted with doors leading to other rooms. I dared not look at what was inside. I looked back at the sweeping staircase-and stifled a scream. Staring back at me was the pearly-white shape of a man. His feet hovered above the ground; the stairs were visible through his transparent figure. A wave of nausea hit me, and I doubled over, spilling the contents of my lunch on the floor. For the second time that day, my world turned black.  Where was I? Where was the staircase? Where were the doors? I was in a four-poster bed, with curtains surrounding it, blocking my view of the room. There was a rocking chair, I could hear it creaking in time to the sweet, eerie music coming from outside. The curtains swayed. I pulled them aside. All the windows were shut. There was nothing visible in the room that could have caused the curtains to move. That was what worried me. Something moved behind me.  "AHHHHHH!!!!!" I screamed. As I was turning, something cold and sticky ad clamped around my neck. I tensed up. I tried to turn around to see what was holding me. The moment I moved, I started writhing in pain. My movement had been some kind of signal to start the torture. Mental torture. I’m sure the creature behind me wasn’t saying anything, but words and images flashed in my head. Images of death and blood. Words of curses. Curses. Like the one that had killed my family. Like the one that would kill me. That is, if I don’t escape this house right now. "AHHHHH!!!!!" the THING found my weak spot. A picture of my family. My family, bloody, with their throats split open. And a puddle of blood, spreading, spreading.

The grip on my neck slackened. Wasting no time, I jumped up from the bed, sprinting to the door. I yanked it open. The hallway was lined with doors. Which one took to the exit? Panting, I tugged at the windows. None of them opened. Screaming now, I tried the doors. None budged. I tried them all again. One opened...

"AHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!" lying in front of me were 6 faces I knew well. My family, freshly murdered. I was crying so loud now, that I didn't hear the door slamming shut. I was trapped. I felt something cold and sticky on my neck again. I had failed. I was doomed, like the rest of my family. Something cold and sharp touched my neck. Then I knew no more.

*A blood-curdling scream could be heard from the nearby house. Anyone walking nearby would have jumped out of their skin. As it is, none but a black raven heard it.*